

Cere- into the canals and fields is a great event in the Egyptian  
Xerved in y<sup>ear</sup>. At Cairo the operation generally takes place between  
Egypt at the sixth and the sixteenth of August, and till lately was  
of the tting attended by ceremonies which deserve to be noticed, because  
dams early they were probably handed down from antiquity. An  
ugusi. anc<sup>ent</sup> canals known by the name of the Khalij, formerly  
passed through the native town of Cairo.  
Near Its entrance the canal was crossed by a dam of earth, very broad at  
the bottom and diminishing in breadth upwards, which used to be constructed before or soon after the Nile began to rise. In front of the dam, on the side of the river, was reared a truncated cone of earth called the 'arooseh or The Bride "bride," on the top of which a little maize or millet was of the Nile. genera}y sowl This "bride" was commonly washed down by the rising tide a week or a fortnight before the cutting of the dam. Tradition runs that the old custom was to deck a young virgin In gay apparel and throw her Into the river as a sacrifice to obtain a plentiful Inundation.<sup>1</sup>  
Sacrifices Certainly human sacrifices were offered for a similar purpose s<sup>ages</sup> t b<sup>y</sup> the Wajagga of German East Africa down to recent the cutting: years. These people irrigate their fields by means of skil- am " fully constructed channels, through which they conduct the water of the mountain brooks and rivers to the thirsty land. They Imagine that the spirits of their forefathers dwell in the rocky basins of these rushing streams, and that they would resent the withdrawal of the water to Irrigate the fields If compensation were not offered to them. The water-rate paid to them consisted of a child,

uncircumcised  
and of unblemished body, who was decked  
with ornaments  
and bells and thrown Into the river to  
drown, before they  
ventured to draw off the water Into the  
irrigation channel  
Having thrown him in, his executioners  
shewed a clean  
pair of heels, because they expected the river  
to rise in flood  
at once on receipt of the water-rate.<sup>2</sup> In  
similar circum-  
stances the Njamus of British East Africa  
sacrifice a sheep  
before they let the water of the stream flow  
into the ditch

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* und  
Feldbausitten  
Wachstumsbrauche der chagga," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*,  
Wads-  
paisley and London, 1895), ch. xxvi. xlv. (1913) pp. 484 ff.